

# ***NEWS RELEASE***



a division of the  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

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PUBLIC INFORMATION SECTION, P.O. Box 1368, Jefferson City, MO 65102

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Colonel Jerry E. Adams, Commissioner

***For further information contact:***

Sergeant Paul E. Kennedy, Director  
Public Information & Safety Education  
Phone: (573)-751-3333  
Fax: (573)-522-1287  
E-mail: [pkennedy@mswp.state.mo.us](mailto:pkennedy@mswp.state.mo.us)  
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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Jefferson City, Missouri***

***#1. National Safe Boating Week -- May 18 thru 24, 2002*** -- encourages boaters to plan for a safe day on the water with the theme ***“Boat Smart from the Start.”*** Recreational boating casualties have become the second leading cause of transportation related fatalities after highways. On average, over 700 people die in boating-related accidents each year with a growing percentage of these being children. Nearly nine out of ten victims who drown were not wearing a life jacket. Eight out of ten boating fatalities occur on boats where the operator had no boating safety education. The trend is obvious. Typically the victims of boating accidents are not the safety conscious, educated boaters. The Missouri State Water Patrol encourages all boaters to refresh their boating knowledge by reading the Handbook of Missouri Boating Laws and Responsibilities and to take a boating safety course. In 2001, Missouri boaters fell victim to 310 boating accidents. Through education and knowledge we hope to reduce those numbers. Already this year, due to high water conditions and inattention, **six** boaters have lost their lives and an additional two have drowned. Your assistance in spreading the word about water safety will be greatly appreciated by the Missouri State Water Patrol, National Safe Boating Council and Coast Guard Auxiliaries statewide, along with the boaters of the State of Missouri.

***#2. Memorial Day Holiday Weekend – May 24 thru 27, 2002.*** Realizing that recreational boating can result in tragedy is one of the first steps to insuring a safe day on the water. Boaters who are not prepared often pay the price in fines, injury or death. The fast paced activities that surround most of Missouri’s water recreation areas require boaters to not only use knowledge of the rules and regulations, but to rely heavily on common sense and good judgement. Taking into account that the majority of boating accidents are the result of operator-controlled factors, the responsibility lies with the operators to ensure a safe day on the water. Numerous accidents, injuries and, occasionally, fatalities mark every holiday weekend in the summer. With the help of the local media we hope to lessen those statistics.

Watch the Missouri State Water Patrol homepage at [www.mswp.state.mo.us](http://www.mswp.state.mo.us) for updates on Boating Safety Courses in your area.

**MISSOURI STATE WATER PATROL**  
**Telephone (573) 751-3333**  
**Home Page <http://www.mswp.state.mo.us>**